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REPORT NO. CS-317/04110-72

DATE DISTR. 16 August 1972

COUNTRY North Vietnam

DOI March 1966

SUBJECT Downing of Aircraft and Capture
 of A Crewman in Thanh Hoa Province,
 North Vietnam

ACQ

SOURCE

Summary: In March 1966, then sixteen years old, witnessed the downing of an aircraft and the subsequent capture of a crewman in Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. The crewman landed by parachute without injury, was captured, and was last seen by [redacted] as his captors escorted him from the area. End [redacted] Summary.

1. According to [redacted] he had, as a youth of sixteen in March 1966, seen two jet-propelled aircraft flying at about 1145 hours over his house in May Quan Trang Hamlet, Ha Vinh Village, Ha Trung District, Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. The aircraft were flying in a southeasterly direction; one was on fire and as [redacted] observed was descending rapidly from an altitude of about seven hundred meters. The descent was smooth at an approximate angle of fifty degrees, nose down. The flames were emanating from the fuselage just

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aft of the swept-back wings. The second aircraft was flying straight and level at an approximate altitude of just over one thousand meters and trailing the damaged aircraft by about five hundred meters. The damaged plane crashed into a muddy field (XH00851588), approximately five hundred meters southeast of [redacted] house. The aircraft did not explode on impact, but appeared to fall apart.

2. As the burning plane was descending, [redacted] saw a man parachuting from an altitude of approximately four hundred fifty meters, about two hundred fifty meters behind the burning aircraft. The parachute, made of alternating red and white colors extending from the center to the outer edge in wedge-shaped patterns, landed in a rice field (WH99651570) approximately five hundred meters southwest of [redacted] house.

3. The plane which appeared to have been accompanying the damaged aircraft descended to just over one hundred meters and began to fly in a circular pattern over the area. About five minutes later, another plane joined the second plane, flying in the orbital pattern. The aircraft continued to encircle the area for approximately one hour then departed. About thirty minutes later two jet-propelled planes reached the area and flew an orbital pattern about three kilometers in circumference at an altitude of approximately one thousand meters. They continued to encircle the area for about two hours and then departed.

4. According to a member of the Ha Trung District Self-Defense Force (SDF), [redacted] later the same day, when he first saw the crewman on the ground, he already had disengaged himself from his parachute and had not visibly signaled the aircraft overhead. When the crewman saw a farmer running along the nearby levee toward him, the crewman, at a distance of approximately one hundred fifty meters, drew his pistol and fired one shot in the farmer's direction. He did not hit the farmer. When the farmer heard the shot he turned and ran to his house. Continuing, Xuong said that another SDF member, staying low to conceal his presence, cautiously approached the crewman. That SDF member heard the crewman speaking but did not see a radio. The SDF man suddenly stood up, raised a large stick in a threatening manner, and told the pilot in English, "Gun down!". The crewman raised his hands. (Field Comment: Source said that according to [redacted] the crewman had discarded his gun.)

5. About fifteen civilian inhabitants of My Quan Trang Hamlet and an unknown number of SDF personnel of Ha Trung and Nga Son Districts had gathered in the area by the time the crewman was captured. Assuming responsibility for the situation, the Nga Son SDF took the crewman's uniform, two rings, wristwatch, pistol, and parachute. The SDF personnel then bound the crewman's elbows behind his back with rope.

6. As the crewman, under guard, passed [redacted] at a distance of approximately fifteen meters, [redacted] observed that he was a male Caucasian, approximately 1.65 to 1.70 meters tall, and weighed about seventy-five kilograms. His build was muscular, and his hair, light brown with receding hairline. He was clean shaven and uninjured. The crewman wore an olive green undershirt and red, [redacted]

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loosely fitting shorts, the legs of which extended to mid-thigh. The crewman was wearing his zippered boots which he had been allowed to retain. The boots were black leather (as distinguished from the tropical-type, leather-canvas boots) and extended to midcalf. As [redacted] last observed the crewman, his arms were bound, but he was walking freely between two Nga Son SDF personnel southwestwardly in the direction of Nga Son District. While in [redacted] sight, the crewman did not resist his captors.

7. The fallen aircraft was guarded by SDF members who warned the hamlet inhabitants to stay away from it for fear the planes which had circled overhead the day the plane had fallen might return and shoot at them. Two days later, however, [redacted] was allowed to approach the plane while the SDF were digging out the wreckage. One badly bent wing and part of the nose were the only large pieces of the plane remaining intact. (Field Comment: The "nose" as described by [redacted] may have been part of the fuselage.) [redacted] described the two identical insignias on the pieces (20 cm. in diameter on the wing and about 40 cm. on the "nose") as follows: The insignia was circular and consisted of three outer rings with a star in the center. Red stripes appeared outside the circular insignia and extended outward horizontally on each side. The outer ring was red, approximately 1 cm. in width; the center ring was dark green, about 2 cm. wide; the inner ring was white, nearly 3 cm. wide. The center star was five-pointed and barely touched the inner white ring. Each point of the star had been divided vertically from the outer tip to the middle of the star with alternating strips of red and white. The background between the star and the inner white circle was the same color as the body of the plane, silver but not shiny. "U.S.A." in black letters appeared directly below the outer ring of the insignias. [redacted] saw other red and black numbers and letters, but could not remember what they were. [redacted] also saw ammunition which the SDF personnel told him were 12.7mm. and 20 mm. The tail section of the aircraft was charred, and [redacted] could not make out the exact color. [redacted] saw no bombs or rockets.

8. (Field Comment: (1) In June 1968, [redacted] received aircraft-recognition training while serving in the Ham Rong area, Thanh Hoa Province Antiaircraft Unit G-12, subordinate to the 228th Regiment. Based on this training, [redacted] thought that the aircraft he had observed in 1966 were either F-105's or F-8's. (2) [redacted] was unable to identify the crewman from among the JPRC photographs of missing and captured personnel.)

9. (Field Comment: This report was submitted to the Joint Personnel Recovery Center which provided the following comments: "Records maintained at this office show that there are two individuals who correlate very closely to the area/time frame of this report. They are Lieutenant William D. Frawley, U.S.N., and Lieutenant (j.g.) William H. Christensen. According to this report, only one man parachuted to safety. Without further information or specifics, no positive identification is possible.")

10. [redacted]

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